

FRANKFORD ELEVATED
5200 to 5400 Frankford Avenue (guideway and stations)
Philadelphia
Philadelphia County
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-430

HAER
PA
SI-PHILA
706-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

FRANKFORD ELEVATED

HAER No. PA-430

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706.

Location: 5200 to 5400 Frankford Avenue (guideway and stations) and the block bounded by Bridge Street, Penn Street, Sanger Street and Bustleton Avenue (train yard), Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania

UTM Coordinates: USGS Frankford Quadrangle, PA - NJ, 1:24,000
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
18.493490.4430593
18.493145.4430145
18.493302.4430025

Date of Construction: 1920 - 1922

Engineer: Department of City Transit, City of Philadelphia

Architect: Department of City Transit, City of Philadelphia

Present Owner: City of Philadelphia

Present Use: Mass Transit Stations and Train Maintenance Facility

Significance: The Frankford Elevated is significant as an early 20th century mass transit system in Philadelphia that had significant local impact on the patterns of growth and development in the city. The elevated includes structures and station buildings that are representative of early 20th century transportation and commercial design.

Project Information: The guideway east of Dyre Street and portions of the Pratt Street Station are to be demolished as part of the Frankford Transportation Center Project being undertaken by Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA). This documentation is submitted in partial fulfillment of the terms of the Memorandum of Agreement between the Federal Railroad Administration and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

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The Frankford Elevated

At the turn of the nineteenth century, Philadelphia's intercity public transportation was largely controlled by the privately-held Union Traction Company. It was comprised of an elaborate network of electric, cable and horse drawn trolleys. The trolley systems, which operated on city streets, at grade, had grown inefficient and contributed significantly to massive street congestion. In an effort to resolve the situation, the principals of the Union Traction Company formed the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company to continue operation of Union Traction, while pursuing the construction of several elevated rapid transit lines that had been authorized by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Construction was begun on the first line, the Market Street Subway-Elevated, in 1902, with service along its full length, from 69th Street to 2nd Street, commencing in 1908.

Unfortunately, with the construction of the Market Street line, the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company had exhausted its capital, and was unable to proceed with a second elevated line that had been planned to connect Center City with the northeastern reaches of the City. In an effort to continue the modernization of its mass transit, the City, in 1913, successfully applied for approval from the Commonwealth to construct the second line, the Frankford Elevated, with its own resources. Upon its completion, the City leased the line to the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company who oversaw its operation.

Rather than rely on consulting engineers and architects, the Department of City Transit designed the project in-house under the leadership of William S. Twining, its Director, and Henry H. Quimby, the department's Chief Engineer. The first construction contract for the elevated line was awarded in 1915, and the line was completed and open to the public in 1922. It had been planned for completion in 1918, but material shortages caused by World War I delayed the work.

The project also was reduced in scope from its original design. As first envisioned, the elevated was to connect with the Market Street Subway-Elevated at 2nd Street, continue north on Front Street to Kensington Avenue, run northeast along Kensington Avenue to Frankford Avenue, then continue along Frankford Avenue to Holmesburg. Ultimately, budgetary constraints led to a termination of the line, three miles short of the planned terminus, at the Bridge Street Yard. A Bustleton Surface trolley line was created to reach communities beyond.

The Guideway

Along most of the six-mile route, a double set of tracks were supported by double-column bents which carried the longitudinal trusses and track bed. As described in a souvenir booklet issued for the inauguration of the line, the columns were formed of "...Bethlehem II [double I-beams] and channel sections with plates added where loads to be carried required larger sections." The transverse girders were "...generally of the plate-girder type, with ends beyond the outside [outboard of the] longitudinal girders sloped down to the height of sixteen inches over the columns." For the longitudinal trusses, the engineers specified three "...halfthrough Pratt-type [trusses] with plate and angle chords, flats for diagonals, except counters, for which angles were used, and angles for verticals and end stiffeners." Depending on the street configuration

below, the span of the longitudinal trusses varied from 31 feet, 6 inches to 73 feet, 6 inches. Between stations, the track ties were laid in ballast. At the stations, and over longer spans and bridges, "dowel stones" and "short tie blocks" were used in lieu of ballast. Due to community objections to the double column bents, which would have restricted narrow sidewalks, a center column, cantilevered guideway was erected between Church and Dyre streets in Frankford.

The Stations along the Route

Twelve stations originally were constructed along the elevated: Fairmount Avenue, Girard Avenue, Berks Street, Dauphin-York Streets, Huntingdon Street, Somerset Street, Allegheny Avenue, Tioga Street, Torresdale Avenue, Church Street, Orthodox-Margaret Streets and Bridge Street. The latter station included a separate station building and stair at Pratt Street, and a terminal and Trainmen's Building at Bridge Street. Contemporary literature cites the arrangement of the stations as being unique to elevated design of the period. Rather than having been constructed underneath the guideway, with stairs to the sidewalks below, the stations were constructed mostly on corner properties that adjoined the guideway. This arrangement lessened sidewalk congestion and allowed for greater architectural expression in the stations. The stations were constructed in brick with terra cotta and granite trim. Serving primarily as stair pavilions, with associated ticketing, the buildings were open to the air.

The Frankford Elevated Complex

The term "Frankford Elevated Complex" was adopted by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) to describe the terminus buildings of the Frankford Elevated line that were constructed between 1920 and 1922. The stations and guideway, to the southwest of Dyre Street, previously had been determined to be ineligible for the National Register. The structures to the northeast of Dyre Street, included in the Frankford Elevated Complex, were determined to be eligible for the National Register and representative of the entire Frankford Elevated line. The complex, as delineated by PHMC includes: the Pratt Street Station, the Bridge Street Station and Trainmen's Building, and the Bridge Street Yard.

The Pratt Street Station is located on the intersection of Pratt Street and Frankford Avenue. It consists of a two-story station building on the south side of Frankford Avenue, a mezzanine that runs under, and is attached to, the guideway, and an entrance/exit stair on the north side of Frankford Avenue. The station shares a center platform and butterfly canopy with the Bridge Street Station to the east.

The Bridge Street Station and Trainmen's Building is located at the intersection of Bridge Street, Bustleton Avenue and Frankford Avenue. This station building is a two-story structure with an additional story in the center of the building. It is rectangular in plan, with an angled or splayed facade running parallel to Frankford Avenue. The building was designed to serve a dual purpose as a station building and as a rest station for the operating trainmen.

The Bridge Street Yard is bordered to the north by Penn Street, to the east by Cheltenham Avenue, to the south by Bustleton Avenue and to the west by Bridge Street. This portion of the complex can be subdivided into three zones, each corresponding to a separate function.

Surface automobile parking is found at the southern end of the lot along Bustleton Avenue. North of the parking is the train storage area, where trains are parked during off-hours. At the northern end of the site, adjoining Penn Street, is the Train Maintenance Facility, which historically was known as the Car Inspection Shop. The shop, which is used to inspect trains between runs, is the only large-scaled building on the yard site.

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- 6630-T *Frankford Elevated: end of street prior to joining with subway, bent no. 5 ½, January 12, 1920.*
- 7091-T *Frankford Elevated: Arch Street curve to connect with subway, February 14, 1921.*
- 7374-T *Frankford Elevated: beginning of El at Front and Arch, October 21, 1921.*
- 7653-T *Frankford Elevated: juncture with subway at Front and Arch, October 18, 1922.*

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- 3298 *Kensington Avenue, October 16, 1916.*
- 3307-T *Kensington Avenue: Lehigh looking southwest, October 23, 1916.*
- 4538-T *Kensington: Lehigh - panorama of arch and span June 4, 1917.*

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- 4713-T *Frankford Avenue: placing of first single column and bent no. 520, north of Church Street, July 26, 1917.*
- 4719-T *Frankford Avenue: looking south from bent no. 531, July 30, 1917.*
- 4818-T *Frankford Avenue: structure in place looking north from Church Street, September 11, 1917.*
- 6145-T *Frankford Elevated: last single column and bent no. 615, Dyre Street, May 9, 1919.*
- 6269-T *Frankford Elevated: south from Ruan Street Station, June 14, 1919.*
- 7126-T *Frankford Elevated: bent no. 620, north of Dyre Street, March 14, 1921.*
- 7162-T *Frankford Elevated: bent no. 635, south of Bridge Street, unloading 35 ton girder, May 2, 1921.*
- 7767-T *Frankford Elevated: Girard Avenue Station, northeast corner, March 15, 1923.*
- 7775-T *Frankford Elevated: Bridge Street Trainmen's Building from north, March 21, 1923.*
- 29757 *Platform - Bridge Street Station, view north, November 13, 1952.*

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LEGEND


 **Free Interchange Between Lines**
Stay within stations and change lines without added charge.
Transfer tickets are not required for FREE interchange between Rapid Transit Lines.

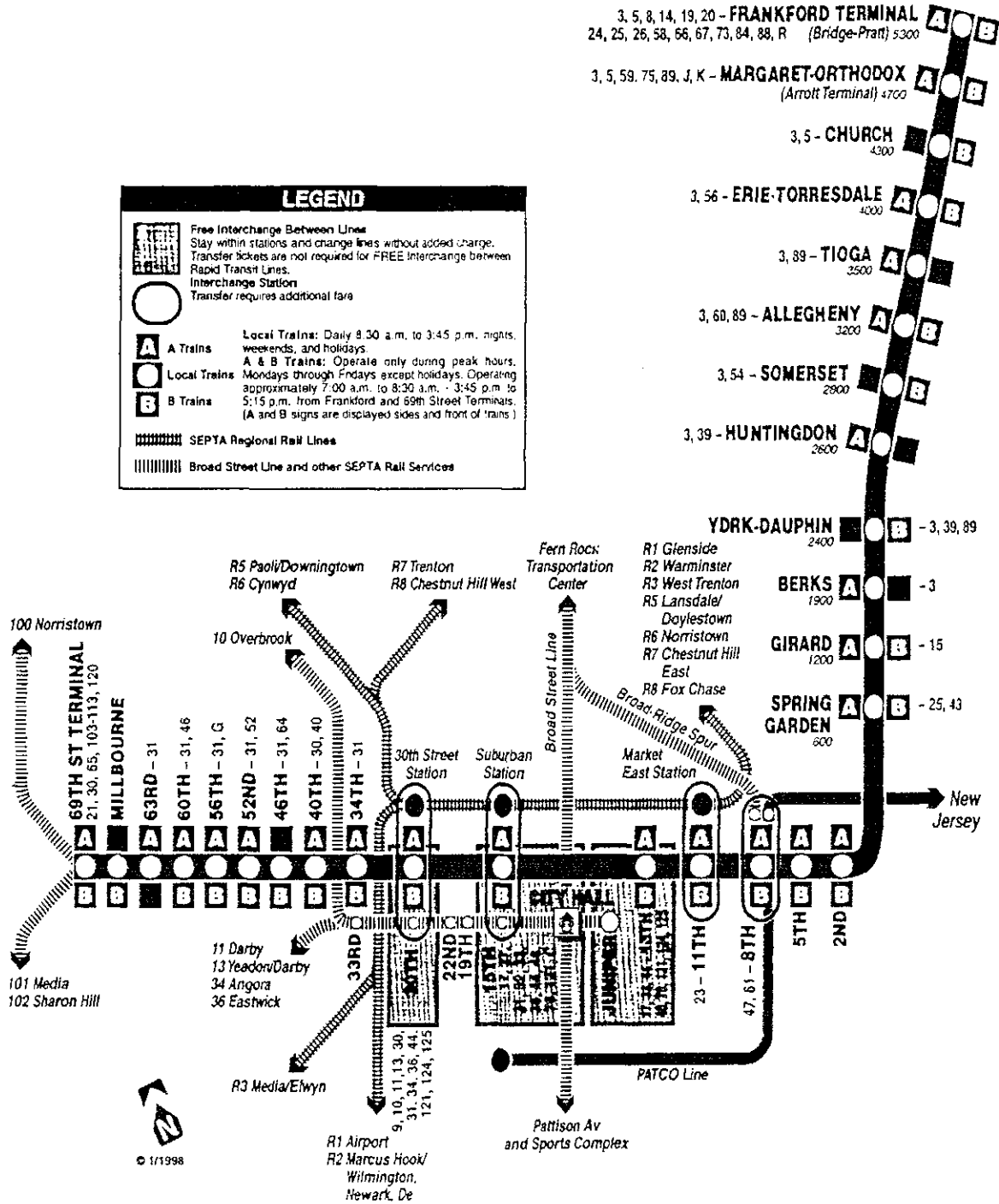
 **Interchange Station**
Transfer requires additional fare

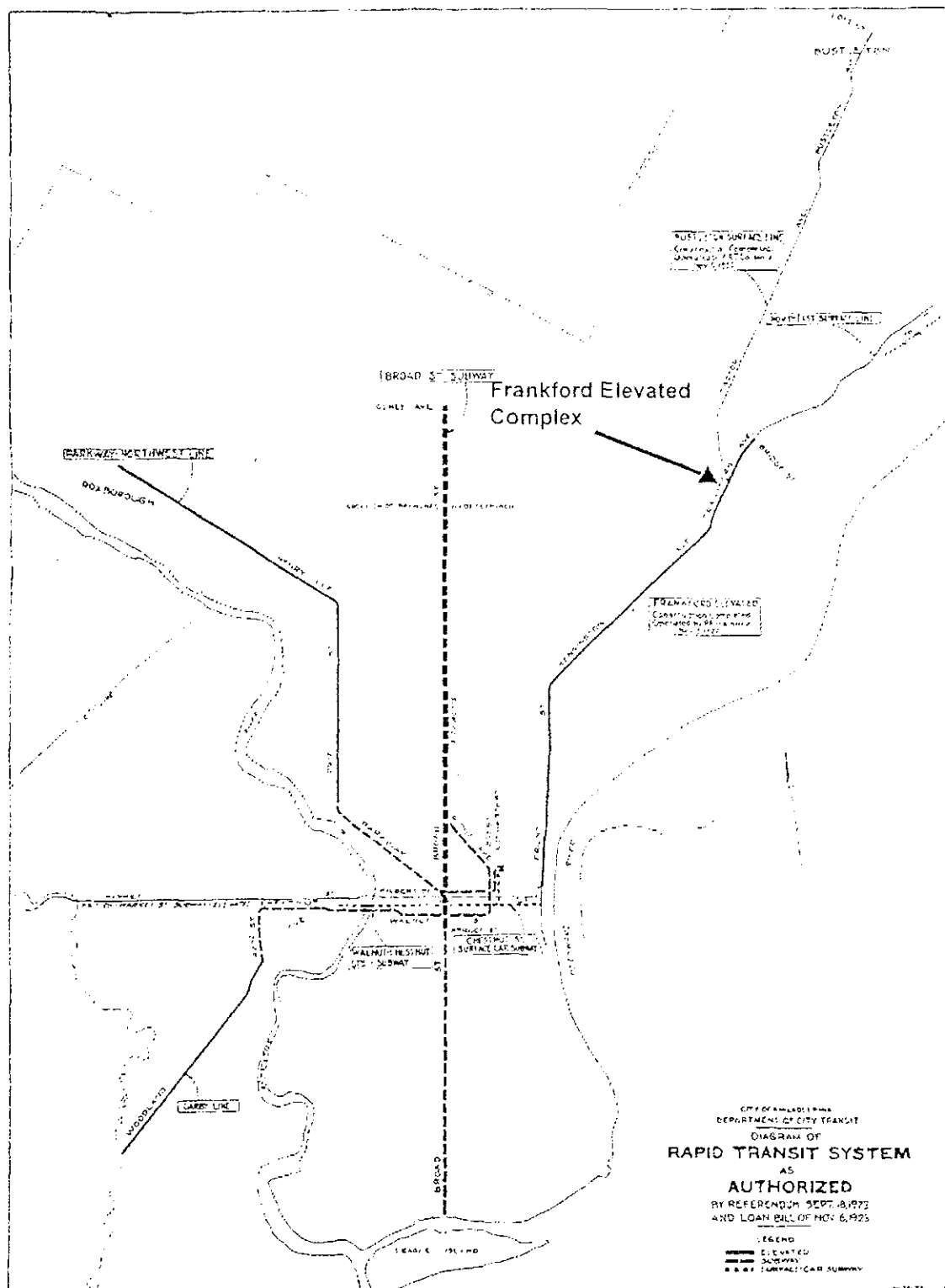
 **A Trains**
Local Trains: Daily 9:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m., nights, weekends, and holidays.
A & B Trains: Operate only during peak hours.

 **B Trains**
Local Trains: Mondays through Fridays except holidays. Operating approximately 7:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. - 3:45 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. from Frankford and 69th Street Terminals. (A and B signs are displayed sides and front of trains)

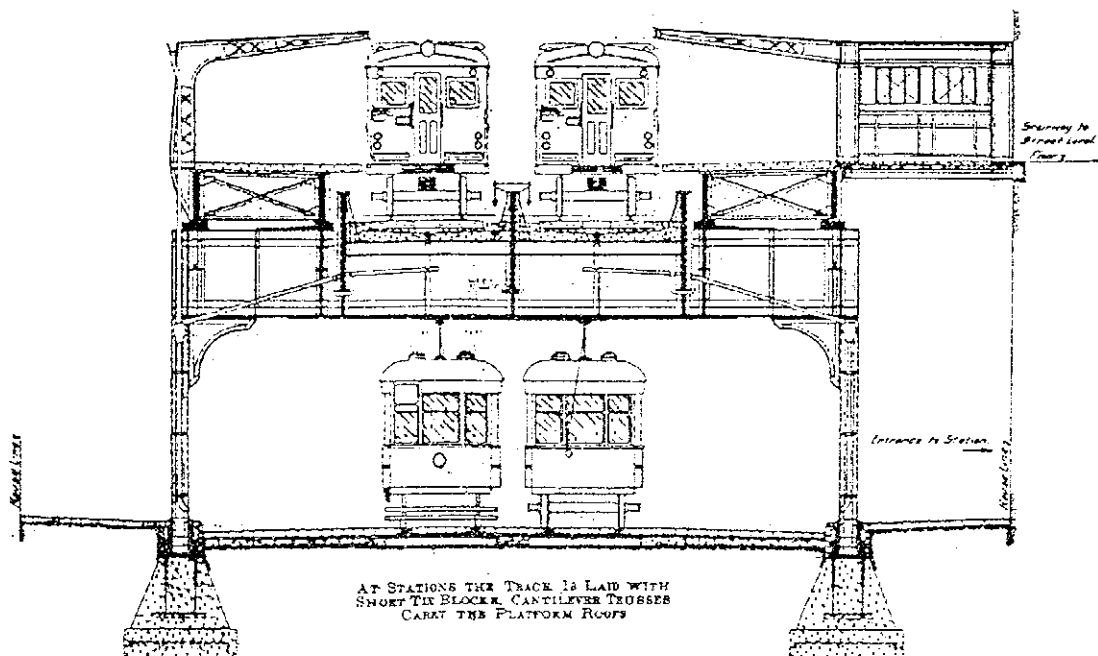
 **SEPTA Regional Rail Lines**

 **Broad Street Line and other SEPTA Rail Services**

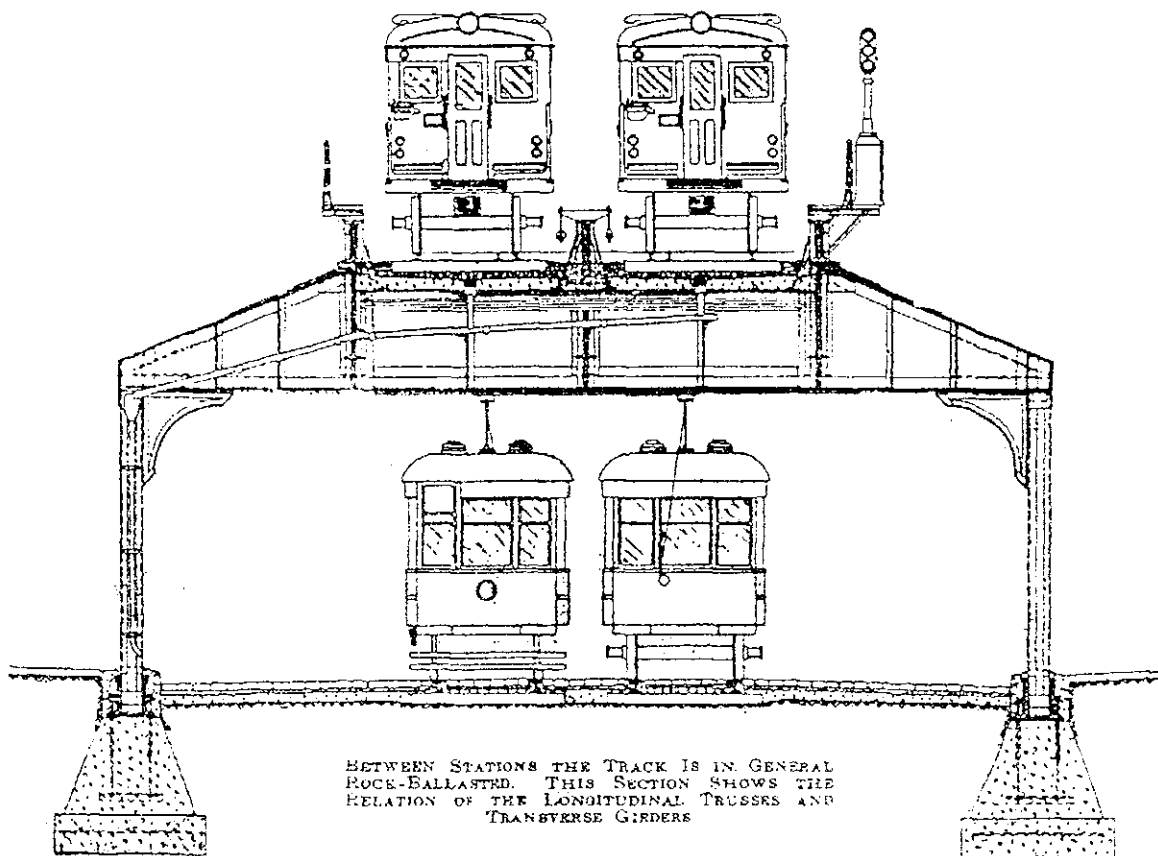




From: Department of City Transit Files, City of Philadelphia Archives



Guideway at Stations



Guideway between Stations

